

# Strategic Plan



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Document Log			
<b>Document Title:</b>	American Community Survey Program Strategic Plan		
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Frank A. Vitrano, Associate Director for the 2020 Decennial Census		
<b>Document Approval Date</b>	June 18, 2012		
<b>Document Tier</b>	Program		
<b>Document Author(s)</b>	Sally Obenski, Special Assistant to the Director, and Amy Squires, MITRE		
<b>Critical Reviewer(s)</b>	ACS Program Senior Staff, Debbie Griffin, ACSO		
<b>Sensitivity Assessment</b>			
This document does not contain any:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title 5, Title 13, Title 26, or Title 42 protected information</li> <li>• Procurement information</li> <li>• Budgetary information</li> <li>• Personally identifiable information</li> </ul>			
<b>Version History</b>			
Version	Date	Description of Change	Approval Authority
v0.8	2/27/2012	Received Comments from Frank Vitrano on proposed baseline	N/A
v0.9-v0.12	3/21/2012	ACS Program Managers Comments and Sally Obenski edits	N/A
v1.0	6/18/2012	Final approval	Frank A. Vitrano, Associate Director for the 2020 Decennial Census

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## **1 Introduction**

A Strategic Plan defines an organization's priorities and, as such, serves as a powerful management tool to guide subsequent management decisions about work, resource allocation and performance. This strategic plan defines the American Community Survey (ACS) Program's vision, goals and mission outcomes for the next five years. For each goal, the plan identifies related objectives and specific strategies that will be used to achieve the goals. Each strategy translates into one or more specific projects that will be undertaken during the five-year period to build towards the mission outcomes. These projects and their sequencing are captured in the Strategic Improvement Plan. Both the Strategic Plan and the Strategic Improvement Plan will be used by the ACS Program to prioritize and ultimately manage the work needed to accomplish the intended outcomes.

## **2 The American Community Survey Program's Business**

The American Community Survey (ACS) is the successor to the decennial census long form. As such, like the short-form census, it is authorized by Title 13 and is thereby the only sample household survey for which participation among sample units is mandatory by law. For that reason, it attains high rates of participation (over 96 percent), giving users confidence in the accuracy of the results. Further, as the largest survey in the United States, the ACS is the only source of small-area statistics on a wide range of important housing, social and economic characteristics for all communities in the country. It is, therefore, the most comprehensive source of information about the population.

The data traditionally captured through the decennial census and now through the ACS are used for many governmental and non-governmental purposes besides the apportionment of representation among states. Within states, census results are used to draw congressional and state legislative districts and to distribute billions of federal dollars each year. State and local governments use ACS estimates to inform a variety of planning decisions, including where to build new schools and hospitals and where to focus public transportation efforts. Business and non-profit organizations use ACS estimates to determine where to locate and to predict the types of products or services that may be needed in a given geographic area. For example, fast food restaurants may use the information to identify locations with growing numbers of young families. A non-profit organization specializing in services to a certain population can use ACS estimates to identify where services are most needed. Academic researchers use ACS results to view trends over time or gather information on specific subgroups of the population.

Given how dynamic the American economy and population have become, collecting such data only every 10 years was determined to be insufficient to meet these many needs (i.e., the information was simply too infrequent to enable truly informed decision-making). Moreover, the decennial census is a significant operational challenge, and collecting the full range of data through that means further complicated the successful execution of that once-every-ten-years' operation. To that end, the ACS was designed as a monthly, year-round sample of all addresses

across the country to deliver timely, accurate, and detailed information to meet the range of needs described above. The ACS was first implemented as a full-scale program in 2005 and successfully has replaced the long form of the decennial census, as witnessed through the 2010 census form with its ten questions and with the release of ACS estimates for all geographic areas in 2010.

The American Community Survey program administers the Puerto Rico Community Survey. This document will refer generally to the ACS and, in doing so, will mean both surveys.

## 2.1 Stakeholders

The ACS program has a breadth of stakeholders who have an interest or stake in the mission, but from varying perspectives. Stakeholders include those organizations or individuals that can influence or are impacted by the ACS program. We can group all other ACS stakeholders more generally as follows:

- Customers that fund and/or consume ACS data products:
  - Federal data users include a breadth of federal departments and agencies, such as the Department of Labor and its Bureau of Labor Statistics
  - Non-federal data users encompass a diverse range of entities, including:
    - Business/commercial interests such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and large and small businesses that need to understand social and economic changes that influence business opportunities
    - Non-profit organizations that need to understand economic and social changes that may influence demand for the services they provide
    - Regional, state, local, and tribal government agencies that need to deliver services in changing economic or social conditions
    - Academic interests that use ACS information to understand changes in the country
    - Members of the public
- Other stakeholders that provide valuable guidance to the Census Bureau:
  - Advisors: those who provide expertise to the Census Bureau about how best to fulfill its mission, by providing methodological expertise and insights about how to reach different demographic groups, etc. These groups include the National Academy of Sciences and several Federal Advisory Committees.
  - Oversight Bodies: those who monitor the ACS program's execution to ensure it fulfills its mission consistent with authorization and appropriation. Representing

the legislative branch are the Congress and the Government Accountability Office (GAO). For the executive branch, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) oversees the program from the perspective of broader federal statistical and budget policy. The Department of Commerce (DOC) and its component, the Economics and Statistics Administration (ESA), monitor the program's execution of its mandates consistent with federal authorization and appropriations and the program's role within the Department.

- **Survey Respondents:** the residents of America's communities. All residents of the United States are potential respondents to the survey, if their address of residence is among the 3.5 million randomly selected each year. The ACS has a responsibility to protect the confidentiality of the information that respondents provide and minimize respondent burden, so respondent feedback informs decisions about survey content

## 2.2 The Challenging Landscape

As the ACS program continues to mature, the Census Bureau must confront and address external challenges to program success. These include:

**Potential policy or legislative changes.** The quality and value of the ACS information is contingent upon a high response rate (the current target is at least 96.4%). The response rate currently achieves that target in part because the ACS program is considered mandatory. As a key resource to many and viewed by many respondents as a burden, the ACS is an obvious candidate for potential legislation related to the actual content, how the survey is conducted, and whether or not it should be mandatory.

**Demographic changes.** Like the decennial census, the ACS program faces the challenge of adapting its outreach and data collection methods to keep up with the rapidly changing American population. More complex living arrangements and a wider range of language needs complicate the accurate and complete capture of ACS data.

**Declining response rates.** Trends across other demographic surveys reveal declining survey response rates. Concerns about information security and privacy, the confidentiality of information given to the government, and how government programs use the information continue to grow. This makes it more challenging to maintain high response rates from an increasingly distrustful public. To date the ACS has been able to maintain consistently high survey response rates but has suffered from reduced mail and telephone response rates. Greater workloads in the personal visit stage of data collection have cost implications.

**Limited understanding of the ACS specifically and statistical programs more generally.** The technical complexity of the mathematics behind survey estimates makes explaining the nature and value of ACS estimates more challenging. These challenges often make it difficult to justify and defend the program's mission and resource requirements.

**Lack of clarity about the role of the ACS program within the Census Bureau and the federal statistical system.** Many different visions have been articulated, but not resolved, for the ACS program. For example, internally, there is discussion about the ACS taking on the role as the test bed for 2020 Census systems and similar survey production environments. Externally, the survey serves as a sampling frame for demographic surveys. The Census Bureau has also chosen to test proposals for “improved operational efficiencies” in the ACS. The relative priorities and lack of clarity means that demands on the ACS program continue to grow and change, challenging the ability of the Census Bureau to anticipate and manage program operations and resources accordingly.

**Improving the program in the face of constrained resources.** This Strategic Plan articulates substantial changes and improvements to the ACS program operations and performance. In the current constrained fiscal environment, this means that the program must be optimized on multiple fronts in order to make informed and strategic investment decisions.

These challenges influence the Census Bureau’s thinking about the program’s work and priorities over the next five years, as described below.

### **3 Assumptions and Constraints**

This section identifies the assumptions and constraints that will continue to affect the ACS program through the execution of the Strategic Plan. It also provides definitions of terms used repeatedly throughout the Strategic Plan and Performance Logic Models.

- The ACS will continue to fulfill the nation’s small area needs for detailed social, economic, and housing information to supplement the decennial census, needs previously met by the former long form sample. The Census Bureau must continue to produce ACS 5-year products. The Census Bureau will reconsider products covering other time periods (e.g., 1-year and 3-year) in the course of executing this plan.
- The ACS program will continue to sample geographies and produce small area estimates for the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The Census Bureau must continue to produce ACS estimates for the smallest governmental units and census geographies (block groups and tracts).
- The ACS program will continue to collect respondent data from the population living in both housing units and all types of group quarters.
- The ACS program will maintain a minimum of four modes of data collection during the timeframe of the plan, once the internet option is fully implemented.
- The Census Bureau will continue to administer the ACS through monthly sampling conducted year-round.

- At a minimum, the Census Bureau will continue to release formal ACS data products in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of each year. The Census Bureau must continue to release ACS data products within 8 months after the end of the calendar year but will consider alternate release schedules in the course of executing this plan.
- The ACS sample size will remain at the FY 2011 levels – 3.54 million addresses sampled every year.
- The ACS program will continue to rely on operational inputs and support from other Census Bureau organizations, such as the Population Division and the Field Division.
- The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will continue to manage the ACS’ content definition process.
- The Census Bureau will explore the role of the ACS as a “test bed” for the 2020 Census or other surveys or data needs in the course of executing this plan. The decisions that emerge may require the ACS managers to reallocate resources and otherwise reconfigure the ACS program operations and organization and fundamentally alter the framework established by this Strategic Plan.
- Given the economic climate, fiscal constraints and possible budget cuts may require the ACS program to accomplish the same with less funding. The addition of new expectations or responsibilities could require prioritization and/or resource reallocation.

## **4 ACS Program Mission and Vision**

This section provides the mission and vision of the ACS program. A mission statement provides a brief description of an organization’s fundamental role and purpose and for whom it serves that role. A vision statement describes the desired state at the end of the strategic planning timeframe.

The ACS program has articulated its mission and vision statements as the following:

**Mission: The American Community Survey collects data and provides quality statistics for America about all its communities.**

**Vision: To be the leading source for current demographic, social, economic, and housing statistics on the nation’s communities:**

- **Trusted for our scientific methods**
- **Responsive to a changing world**
- **Innovative in our solutions**
- **Efficiently implemented**

## 5 Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Over the next five years, the Census Bureau intends to achieve four goals that cascade from the Department's balanced scorecard:

- Goal 1, Mission (Information) Excellence (i.e., what the program does and why): the ACS program produces quality statistics for the nation
- Goal 2, Customer Service Excellence (i.e., how the program meets the needs of those it serves): the ACS program is valued by data users, trusted by the public, and supported by influential stakeholders
- Goal 3, Organizational Excellence (i.e., how the program executes the mission through operational, programmatic, and technical processes): the ACS program is efficient, effective, and adaptable
- Goal 4, Workforce Excellence (i.e., the capabilities of those who execute the mission): the right people want to work on the ACS program

Each goal is decomposed into component objectives, each of which has one or more strategies designed to achieve the objective. The goals and objectives identify *what* is to be achieved, while the strategies describe *how* the objectives, and ultimately the goals, will be achieved. For each strategy, the ACS managers have defined a Performance Logic Model identifying the activities, outputs, interim outcomes, and long-term outcomes needed to achieve that strategy. Achieving the strategy then contributes to achieving the parent objective and the overarching goal. The Performance Logic Models are presented in a separate document, **The ACS Program Performance Logic Models 2012-2017**. The text below identifies, but does not explain the details of, the strategies; those details are described in detail within the Performance Logic Models.

### 5.1 Goal 1: The ACS program produces quality statistics for the nation

The ACS program provides vital information on the social, economic, demographic, and housing characteristics of the nation. Drawing from a monthly, year-round data collection process, the ACS program delivers timely data products to a range of federal and non-federal data users. The data products must be of high quality, because they inform, among other things, how federal agencies distribute billions of dollars in funding to state, local, regional, and tribal entities.

**Strategic Outcome for Goal 1:** Timely, accurate, relevant, accessible/usable information

#### **Objective 1.1 ACS program resources aligned to customers' needs**

The ACS program currently serves a breadth of customers to meet a wide range of demands. In an environment of fiscal constraints, it currently is not clear how the ACS managers should prioritize the various ACS data product needs of the program's customers or how to allocate

limited human resources to customers and stakeholders. To that end, this objective seeks out a high-level policy discussion to help the Census Bureau prioritize and allocate resources appropriately given the key role of the ACS program in the federal statistical system and in addressing the nation's demands for timely, detailed information.

**Outcome:** ACS program resources are appropriately allocated to demand

**Strategy 1.1.1:** Establish a policy for determining how ACS program resources are allocated relative to customers' needs.

**Objective 1.2: Product line mix and release schedule meet data users' needs**

Currently, each year, the ACS program produces a range of data products representing the previous 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year time periods. These products are delivered for the benefit of a wide range of data users, including federal agencies, national businesses, local planning agencies, and non-profit organizations. Although the ACS program engages with its data users in many forums, it does not know how useful the data products are to the breadth of its stakeholders. The ACS managers want to better understand users' satisfaction with the current range of data products delivered.

Similarly, the Census Bureau wants to understand users' needs for the timeliness of the data products. The data products traditionally are released formally beginning in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the calendar year after the undergoing substantial review, editing, and quality assurance processes. The Census Bureau wants to determine whether data users might benefit from receiving some data products earlier in the calendar year.

**Outcome:** Data users are satisfied with release schedules and products

**Strategy 1.2.1:** Assess data users' satisfaction with the current product line mix and release schedule

**Objective 1.3: The ACS content appropriately reflects current data needs**

The Census Bureau wants to ensure the relevance of the data the program collects to federal and non-federal data users. ACS content is determined through a federal inter-departmental process, coordinated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which evaluates proposed content and content changes based on federal agency requirements or any underlying legislative requirements. Discussions regarding the questions to be included on the ACS have not traditionally engaged non-federal data users. The Census Bureau sees value in engaging those non-federal data users in the discussion.

**Outcome:** The ACS content reflects the needs of all of the data users it is intended to serve

**Strategy 1.3.1:** Explore current and new structures for engaging data users in ACS content requirements definition

**Objective 1.4: Data user satisfaction with data products access**

The value of the ACS results is undermined if data users cannot readily access and use the data products. The primary method by which the Census Bureau disseminates the ACS estimates is through the American FactFinder (AFF), a website that provides detailed tables, data profiles, comparison profiles (for 1-year data), narrative profiles, ranking tables and charts (1-year data only), geographic comparison tables, thematic maps, subject tables, selected population profiles, and downloadable summary and public use microdata sample (PUMS) files. The Census Bureau also offers a File Transfer Protocol (FTP) site that provides more advanced users of the ACS information direct access to the set of tabulated estimates immediately upon data release. Users download the tables into Excel, PDF, or text files in order to conduct their own analyses and presentations.

The Census Bureau wants to ensure that the ACS data delivery methods meet users' needs on an ongoing basis. To that end, the Census Bureau will pursue the following strategies.

**Outcome:** ACS data products are delivered in ways that meet the data access abilities of the range of data users

**Strategy 1.4.1:** Evaluate the range of methods for providing data users access to content, in order to deliver the best set of access options for the greatest spectrum of users

**Objective 1.5: Timely changes to new content for demographic, social, economic, and housing data products**

This objective addresses the Census Bureau's efficiency in integrating content changes into the ACS itself and the resulting data products. Fully integrating new content into the survey, executing the survey, and then producing the full range of data products that incorporates the new content can be a lengthy process that the Census Bureau has not consistently measured and managed.

**Outcome:** The Census Bureau identifies, tests, and integrates new content into the ACS in a timely manner, resulting in timely delivery of data products that reflect the new content

**Strategy 1.5.1:** Enhance the current content integration process to better meet user needs within program and resource constraints

**Objective 1.6: Small area and small population data users' needs are met**

The ACS has a special niche in the federal statistical system because it delivers detailed information for small geographic areas and small populations. Because the ACS estimates, like

those from the decennial long form, are based on a sample, some estimates for very small geographic areas or rare population groups can have high levels of sampling variability. As a result, for very small geographic areas and small populations, the ACS program chooses to publish data products that cover a broader span of time. For the very smallest geographic areas the ACS program publishes only 5-year data products. The most reliable estimates for the smallest population groups also come from 5-year estimates. Now that the ACS has more than 5 years of data, small geographic areas and small populations will get data products from the ACS program each year; however, those products will still reflect a five-year time period and thus may not meet the full needs of some data users.

**Outcome:** The needs of small area and small population data users are met, as measured by user satisfaction

**Strategy 1.6.1:** Examine methods to provide small area and small population data users more current data products (e.g., modeled data; time series) and to educate those users about the interpretation of the 5-year estimates

**Objective 1.7: Accurate demographic, social, economic, and housing data products are published at all geographic levels**

The quality of the ACS data is driven by the levels of sampling and non-sampling error. Sampling error is the error caused by observing a sample instead of the whole population. (The expected level of sampling error determines the time period covered by the estimates produced, as the possible sample size may be too small to enable high data confidence for some one- or three-year estimates.) Non-sampling error refers to four types of errors: coverage error, non-response error, measurement error and processing error. The ACS program employs a range of methods to minimize such errors and the impact on the estimates that are released to data users. For each ACS estimate published, the Census Bureau provides its associated margin of error, a measure of sampling error. As well, each year, the Census Bureau publishes the ACS Quality Measures to help prospective data users evaluate the quality of the estimates in light of their intended uses. This includes unit and item response rates, coverage rates, and sample sizes. The Census Bureau recognizes that there may be additional opportunities to reduce different types of error and thus improve the value of the survey data. To that end, the ACS program conducts research and evaluation projects to explore opportunities to improve estimate quality through frame selection, sample design, questionnaire design, data collection methods, editing and imputation, weighting and estimation, and data and data product review.

**Outcome:** Survey quality meets data user requirements, as measured by performance against the ACS program's quality commitments to users and by reductions in levels of non-sampling error

**Strategies:**

1.7.1: Examine methods to reduce sampling error and educate users about the factors contributing to it

## 1.7.2: Prioritize and address major sources of non-sampling error

**Objective 1.8: The ACS program releases data products consistently**

With the intent of maintaining quality in all products it releases, the Census Bureau evaluates whether a given table should be released given the reliability of the estimates included in the table. This policy has contributed to confusion and some frustration on the part of some users. The Census Bureau wants to clarify this policy, including re-considering whether to release tables of a lower quality if essential to meeting users' data needs.

**Outcome:** Data releases are consistent with policy that is understood and accepted by users

**Strategy 1.8.1:** Establish a data release policy that identifies the appropriate methods (including the use of thresholds) that should be used to determine which tables, products, and estimates are released to the public

**Objective 1.9: The ACS program uses statistically sound and robust survey methods**

The Census Bureau wants to ensure that the ACS survey methodologies are consistent with best practices and best knowledge. Recommended new methods may emerge from the Census Research and Methodology Directorate or from the ACS Research and Evaluation efforts and may be appropriate to test and adopt to improve the quality, efficiency, and reliability of the survey data or to achieve other objectives deemed of value. The Census Bureau wants to complete a comprehensive review of the ACS methodology to assess its statistical validity and prioritize and address opportunities to improve the methods.

**Outcome:** Improvements against baseline measures for targeted methodological areas

**Strategy 1.9.1:** Conduct a methodological review of selected survey components to identify opportunities to improve the underlying statistical integrity of the survey

**Objective 1.10: The ACS data quality and implications for use are well understood**

Data users' knowledge of and comfort with statistics varies substantially. Not all data users understand, for example, what different error rates mean and how those kinds of errors may influence their interpretation of the results to support whatever policy or economic decision they are making. The ultimate value of the ACS to the nation comes from data users using the information to make well-informed decisions. The Census Bureau wants to help data users make good choices about when and how to use the ACS information.

**Outcome:** Better informed decision-making based on ACS data products

**Strategy 1.10.1:** Examine approaches for increasing users' understanding of data quality and implications for their own decision-making

## **5.2 Goal 2: The ACS program is valued by data users, trusted by the public, and supported by influential stakeholders**

The ACS program has extensive and diverse stakeholders. This document uses the term stakeholder broadly, to encompass those who advise it, oversee it, provide data to it, and get information from it, for example:

- Advisors: Federal Advisory Committees, National Academy of Sciences
- Oversight: Congress, Government Accountability Office (GAO), Office of Management and Budget (OMB) (budget and statistical policy), the Department of Commerce, Economic and Statistics Administration (ESA), and Office of the Inspector General (OIG)
- Respondents: the American people
- Federal and non-federal data users: federal agencies; government associations (e.g., National Conference of Mayors); business entities and associations (e.g., U.S. Chamber of Commerce); regional, state, and local agencies; academia; think tanks; non-profit organizations; and individual data users.

The Census Bureau needs to interact with these stakeholders in different ways to manage effective policy discussions and ensure that it is fulfilling its mission to deliver high quality information from the ACS to the nation. For example, how the Census Bureau engages with oversight bodies should vary substantially from how the Census Bureau engages business entities. The Census Bureau has not traditionally had a highly coordinated ACS program stakeholder management program and wants to change that through the following objectives.

### **Strategic Outcomes for Goal 2:**

- High customer satisfaction rate spans a wide array of parameters across stakeholder groups
- Response rate remains at least 96.4% (as defined in the OMB Exhibit 300)
- Burden remains the same or lower as measured by change in per household estimated response time, as validated by the OMB through the Information Collection Request for the ACS

### **Objective 2.1: Active and effective engagement of stakeholders**

The ACS program needs to be more strategic in how it engages with its various stakeholders and manages those relationships. Other than the program's engagement with oversight bodies, the program has not to date had a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process, which has inhibited its ability to engage stakeholders constructively in policy decisions about the survey, to ensure that the survey remains relevant and useful for the range of data users.

**Outcome:** The ACS program is supported by stakeholders

#### **Strategies**

2.1.1: Partnering with the Communications Directorate and Policy Office, conduct a comprehensive stakeholder analysis/inventory

2.1.2: Partnering with the Communications Directorate and Policy Office, develop, implement, and maintain over time a Strategic Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Plan, including sub plans targeting specific stakeholder groups

### **Objective 2.2: The ACS program can integrate stakeholder input into decision-making about the ACS program**

The ACS program has not had a rigorous process to date to fully consider stakeholder input and use it to inform program decision-making. This is in part because the timing of the engagement of most stakeholders has typically been after policy decisions have already been proposed, usually through the form of public comment to a Federal Register notice. The Census Bureau wants to evaluate how best to engage stakeholders more proactively in program policy discussions, to help shape the decisions that are subsequently made formally through public notice.

**Outcome:** The ACS program learns from its stakeholders

**Strategy 2.2.1:** Align stakeholder engagement with the program lifecycle

### **Objective 2.3: Satisfactory customer service**

Currently, customer service is provided in different ways, by different parts of the Census Bureau, to different kinds of customers. Federal data users, traditionally considered the ACS' primary audience, can obtain help by contacting the ACS Program Office directly, or by going online to [www.census.gov/acs](http://www.census.gov/acs). Data users among the general public rely on technical assistance information provided on the website and can ask for assistance by: (1) submitting an e-mail through the website; (2) calling the Census Bureau Customer Help Center; (3) calling the Demographic Call Center; (4) reaching out to the relevant Census Bureau Regional Office; and/or (5) reaching out to a State Information Center or Census Information Center. The ACS program currently does not gather and synthesize data about the kinds of questions or problems that these various sources field from the public and, as such, does not consistently identify and

address common problems. The Census Bureau wants to review customers' experience with these different customer service channels and implement improvements. A new staff of Data Disseminators distributed across the nation may be a resource for measuring customer service and customer satisfaction with the ACS.

**Outcome:** Customer service is improved

**Strategy 2.3.1:** Evaluate customers' experience with current customer service and technical assistance

#### **Objective 2.4: Wide-spread awareness, visibility, and use of ACS information**

The ACS program exists to deliver high quality, useful information to the nation. One of the best ways to gauge whether the program is succeeding is to assess the level of use of the ACS data products. The Census Bureau wants to understand the level of current use and then build on that. They also want to see the ACS information cited more frequently.

#### **Outcomes:**

- ACS statistics and data products are used more widely.
- When ACS statistics and data products are used, the ACS is more often identified as the source

#### **Strategies**

2.4.1: Evaluate how stakeholders are currently using ACS statistics, data products, and product lines to identify opportunities to expand and deepen use

2.4.2: Identify approaches to increase awareness and citation of the ACS brand

#### **Objective 2.5: High respondent awareness and response rates**

The quality of the ACS information, and thus the success of the mission, rests largely on the response rate (i.e., those people who are sampled each month need to respond in order for the data for that sample to be representative and for data quality to be maintained). The ACS program currently uses three modes of data collection to elicit responses from the public: (1) a mailed paper form; (2) a telephone interview; and (3) a personal interview. A fourth mode, internet, is expected to be introduced in 2013. Like the decennial census, the ACS is combating the trend of decreasing mail response (as well as decreasing telephone response.). Decreasing response rates for the first mode, the paper form, raises costs as the ACS program must move cases to the other, more expensive follow-up modes. Because the public is not broadly aware of the ACS, it is more challenging to overcome suspicion and disinterest. To improve the public's general awareness and willingness to respond, the ACS program will pursue the following strategies.

**Outcome:** The ACS maintains a high mail response rate and a high overall response rate

**Strategy 2.5.1:** Develop and implement a marketing and outreach program to educate the general public on the purpose and value of the ACS

**Objective 2.6: Minimize burden**

The length of the ACS places a burden on respondents and may discourage them from responding, which would impact the response rate and undermine the quality of the data and value of the survey. It is in everyone's best interests to minimize the burden associated with the survey. Because survey content ultimately is determined through an inter-agency process coordinated by the OMB, the ACS program wants to work with the OMB and the other agencies to identify opportunities to streamline content and maintain rigor in identifying new content for the survey.

**Outcome:** Respondent burden is maintained or reduced, as measured by the Information Collection Request for the ACS

**Strategy 2.6.1:** Explore options to reduce burden

**Objective 2.7: Role of the ACS program within the Census Bureau clarified**

Different views about the role of the ACS program have been expressed within the Census Bureau. Originally, the survey was to replace the decennial long form (which it has done). A more recent view is that the program should be a test bed for the decennial or for the Census Bureau more broadly. To succeed in its mission and to appropriately invest in, allocate resources to, and manage its operations, the Census Bureau needs to know what role it is to play and for whom. To clarify its role within the Census Bureau, the ACS program managers suggest the following strategies.

**Outcome:** Defined role for the ACS program within the Census Bureau

**Strategy 2.7.1:** Establish a framework for evaluating the implications of alternate roles and uses of the ACS program infrastructure within the Census Bureau

**Objective 2.8: Role of the ACS program within the broader federal statistical system clarified**

Similar to Objective 2.7, this objective seeks to clarify the role of the ACS program within the broader federal statistical system. As the largest and most current survey of its kind in the country, the ACS is seen as a potential vehicle to achieve other federal statistical objectives, such as serving as a frame for use by all federal agencies. The OMB-led interagency process has traditionally focused primarily on content changes, less on the role of the ACS and what services it should provide more broadly to federal agencies. As stated in 2.7, to succeed in its mission and to effectively invest in and manage its operations, the Census Bureau needs to know what services it is to provide, what outcomes it is to achieve, and for whom.

**Outcome:** Defined role and performance expectations for the ACS program within the federal statistical system

**Strategy 2.8.1:** Establish a framework for evaluating the implications of alternate roles and uses of the ACS program infrastructure within the broader federal statistical system

### **5.3 Goal 3: The ACS program is efficient, effective, and adaptable**

At any given point in time, the ACS program is dealing with three months' worth of data collection (via forms for the current month, via telephone interview for the preceding month, and via personal interview for the month before that) and processing that data in preparation for producing a range of data products spanning three time series (one-year, three-year, and five-year). Given the operational challenge of executing these various activities simultaneously and successfully in an increasingly dynamic environment, the ACS program management wants to strengthen its internal operational capabilities so that it can be more efficient with available resources while at the same time become more effective and responsive to new demands and changing conditions. As a relatively young program (first fully implemented in 2005), the ACS program has been building its program management, business process, and systems engineering capabilities and has identified specific objectives to be achieved over the next five years.

#### **Strategic Outcomes for Goal 3:**

- Cost per interviewed housing unit is reduced
- The ACS meets performance commitments

#### **Objective 3.1: Efficient, effective, and adaptable survey data collection methods**

The ACS program over time has been expected to collect more and more data, while the act of collection is now more difficult and more expensive. In an environment of fiscal restraint, the ACS program needs to contain costs. Its primary variable costs, which constitute the bulk of the budget, are those associated with data collection. To that end, the Census Bureau wants to examine methods to increase the efficiency and flexibility of field data collection.

#### **Outcomes:**

- Cost per case for data collection is maintained or decreased while quality is maintained or improved
- Time in the field is decreased over the baseline OR cases are resolved more timely

**Strategy 3.1.1:** Strengthen the approach to defining the Research and Evaluation (R&E) program to make it more integrated and strategic.

**Objective 3.2: Efficient and effective operational business processes**

ACS program business processes—its core operations—must enable it to continue to deliver quality information and data products to its data users. The Census Bureau must ensure that its business processes are efficient given the demands and constraints placed on them, and adaptable given the need to ably and quickly manage and integrate changes over time.

**Outcome:** The ACS program has standardized processes that meet performance goals

**Strategy 3.2.1:** Evaluate and prioritize ACS program business processes and implement operational improvements

**Objective 3.3: Efficient and effective program management**

The structure of the ACS program is highly complex, spanning numerous organizational components of the Census Bureau and thus requiring careful management to ensure that all decision-making and operations are fully aligned to enable successful delivery of the mission. Further, strong program management also provides more transparency, better program integration, and risk reduction. The ACS program managers must mature the program's management capabilities to ensure the ACS program's continued success in the future.

**Outcome:** The Census Bureau executes the ACS production and discretionary projects on schedule and on budget for X% of projects

**Strategy 3.3.1:** Evaluate and prioritize program management processes and implement management improvements

**Objective 3.4: Efficient and effective systems engineering and integration**

Much of the work that the ACS program deals with each day is change—integrating requirements for new data content, new data products, new quality standards and procedures—to continually refine operations to meet changing needs. Managing so much change in so complex an environment requires robust systems engineering and integration capabilities, to ensure that the infrastructure is fully aligned with the business at all times in order to achieve the intended business outcomes.

**Outcome:** The ACS program's systems are efficient and effective, producing quality outputs on time

**Strategies:**

3.4.1: Evaluate and prioritize systems engineering processes and implement management improvements

3.4.2: Evaluate and prioritize systems improvements to better support the operation

## **5.4 Goal 4: The right people want to work on the ACS program**

People animate the mission. The ACS program has been successful to date as a result of the hard work and expertise of highly dedicated personnel who have been willing to go to extraordinary lengths to make the young program successful. With the experience of several years' full implementation, with other initiatives under way to improve the processes and infrastructure, and with the likelihood of staff turnover as long-time staff move on or retire, the Census Bureau needs to establish a strong foundation for the program's future success. Specifically, the program needs to put systems and processes in place to facilitate continuity given staff change, to ensure the retention of critical knowledge, and to clearly define, recruit, and retain the right skills in the right positions that will meet the program's needs not just today but in the future.

### **Strategic Outcomes for Goal 4:**

- High retention of staff with critical skills
- Employees' skill sets are appropriate to the work
- Knowledge is institutionalized

### **Objective 4.1: Skilled and retained workforce aligned with program needs**

With the experience of several years' full implementation, this is a good time for the ACS program to consider its workforce needs longer-term, as its processes and systems, and potentially its fundamental role within the Census Bureau and the federal statistical system, evolve. Like the rest of the Census Bureau, the ACS program has not previously done a rigorous review of its core capabilities and competencies as a guide to the work it should and should not do and to the kinds of personnel it needs going forward. Now that the Census Bureau has done its first skills assessment, it can leverage that work to consider its own capabilities and staff competencies and how to maintain a vital workforce through strategic recruiting, training, and development.

### **Outcomes:**

- The ACS program has the qualified staff it needs at any point in time
- Hiring processes are more efficient

**Strategy 4.1.1:** Align resources to the ACS program's core capabilities/competencies

### **Objective 4.2: Knowledge managed institutionally for the benefit of the ACS program**

Aspects of the program's operations currently rely heavily on very specialized expertise held by individual members of the program staff. This expertise is highly valued and respected and will continue to be needed. The fact that this knowledge resides in specific individuals, however,

limits the program's flexibility to expand and adapt to new demands; increases mission risk due to possible staff turnover (e.g., retirements); and limits the opportunities for those individuals to seek different kinds of assignments. To address these limitations, the Census Bureau needs to implement systematic knowledge management capabilities for the program.

**Outcomes:**

- X% improvement in staff program knowledge
- ACS program single points of failure are eliminated
- X% growth in controlled knowledge managed in the repository

**Strategy 4.2.1:** Institutionalize a knowledge management capability within the ACS program

## **Appendix A: Methodology and Consultation**

### **Methodology**

The ACS program used the following approach in developing this Strategic Plan:

- Conducted an environmental scan to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) facing the ACS program
- Conducted working session with the ACS manager of the Program Management Governance Board (PMGB) to validate the preliminary SWOT analysis (see Appendix D)
- Aligned the goals with Department of Commerce's Balanced Scorecard
- Facilitated working sessions with the Census Bureau to validate a preliminary Strategic Framework (see Appendix E)
- Developed Performance Logic Models to serve as the basis for implementing the Strategic Framework and monitoring on-going execution and performance (see **ACS Program Performance Logic Models**, delivered as a separate document)
- Updated the Strategic Framework based on the preliminary Performance Logic Models
- Facilitated working sessions to validate the preliminary Performance Logic Models
- Drafted the ACS Program Strategic Plan
- Validated the Strategic Framework (see Appendix E) and Performance Logic Models (delivered as a separate document) based on the preliminary Strategic Plan
- Obtained management approval and baselined the Strategic Plan and Performance Logic Models

The relationship between the Strategic Plan and the Performance Logic Models is further described in Appendix C.

### **Consultation during the Strategic Planning Process**

The plan was developed through consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

Consultation with the internal stakeholders involved the following:

- Numerous discussions with the ACS Program leadership (i.e., leadership from the Decennial Statistical Studies Division (DSSD), Field Division (FLD), Social, Economic, and Housing Statistics Division (SEHSD), Population Division (POP), and American

Community Survey Office (ACSO)) to create and build out a strategic framework for the program

- Numerous validation points, whereby, after each conversation with ACS program leadership, staff revised the emerging strategic planning framework and provided the update to leadership to confirm the changes made based on the discussions
- Discussions with senior Census Bureau leadership.

The ACS Program also consulted external stakeholders in the process of developing the Strategic Plan. Specifically, ACSO has regularly consulted the Census Scientific Advisory Committee (CSAC) and the Race and Ethnic Advisory Committees (REAC) on its ongoing program improvement efforts. Further, ACSO has contracted with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to assist in achieving many of the technical components of the Strategic Plan.

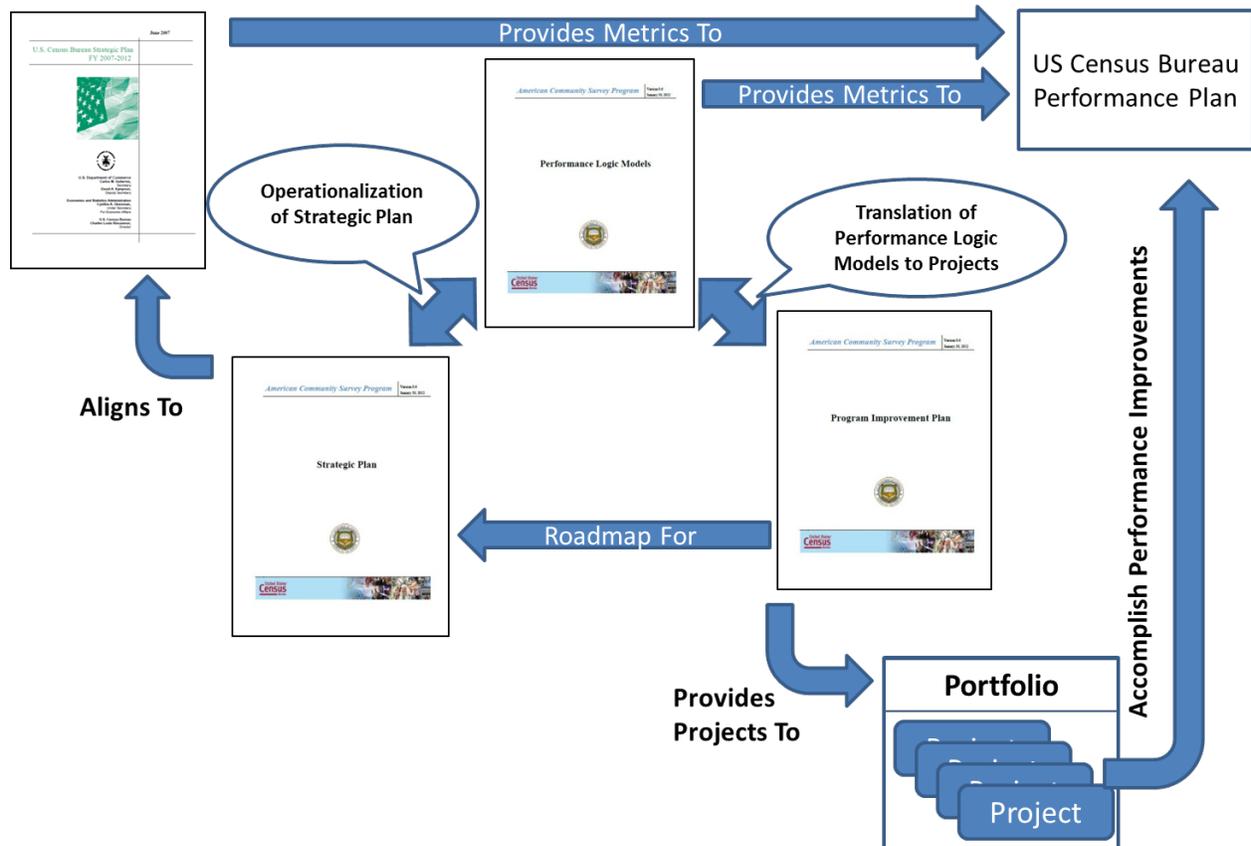
## Appendix B: Glossary

This section provides definitions for terms used repeatedly throughout the Strategic Plan and Performance Logic Models.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Customers	ACS Program data product end users and funding sources
Respondents	ACS data suppliers
Stakeholders	ACS Program customers, advisors, oversight bodies, respondents, and Census Bureau employees
Content	Variables upon which the data collections are based
Survey Questions	Content converted into questions for the respondents to answer
Data	Processed results provided by respondents to survey questions
Product	Compiled and analyzed data offered in multiple formats (e.g. indicators, specialty reports, and statistics) for use by stakeholders

## Appendix C: Strategic Alignment

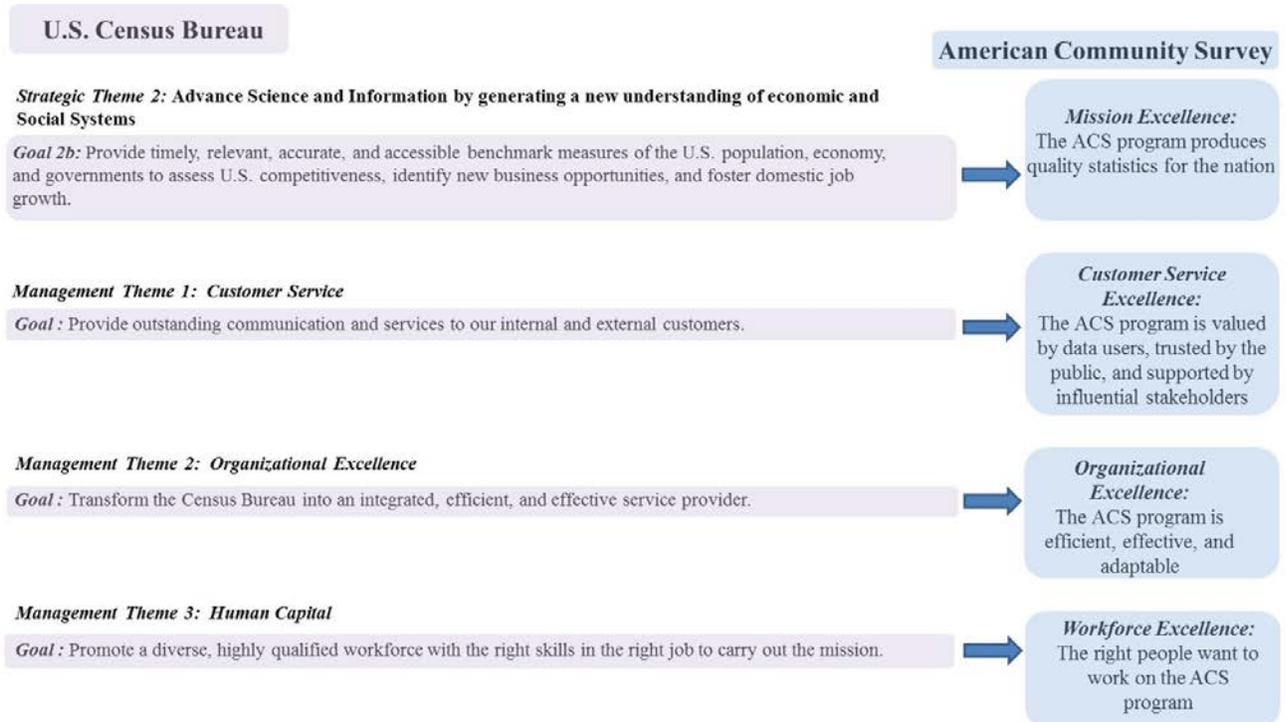
The ACS Program’s Strategic Plan is one piece of a collection of artifacts used to set direction and realize performance improvements at the U.S. Census Bureau. Figure 1 depicts the relationship among the artifacts.



**Figure 1: Relationship among Strategic Artifacts**

The goals, objectives, and strategies captured in the ACS Program’s Strategic Plan and its Strategic Framework provide a hierarchical framework through which progress toward achieving the long-term goals can be assessed. Each goal in the Strategic Plan is implemented through multiple objectives and strategies. The strategies are operationalized through the Performance Logic Models. The Performance Logic Models identify at least one end outcome for each strategy. All strategies are measurable and supported through specific activities and outputs. The Performance Logic Models are then translated into projects that make up the Program Improvement Plan. These projects become part of the Program’s overall Portfolio, and when they are completed, they will help to realize the metrics that are outlined in the U.S. Census Bureau Performance Plan.

The ACS Program’s Strategic Plan aligns with the U.S. Census Bureau Strategic Plan. The ACS Program’s goals map to the goals within the Census Bureau Strategic Plan (2011-2016), as illustrated in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2: ACS Program Goals aligned with U.S. Census Bureau Goals**

## Appendix D: ACS Program (SWOT)

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)

### Strengths

ID	Strengths
S1	Important mission
S2	ACS is a key element of prevailing Commerce, ESA, and Bureau strategic plans
S3	ACS meets/exceeds its OMB-300 performance commitments
S4	Highly experienced and dedicated staff with strong functional expertise
S5	Demonstrated determination to collect, process, and produce annual estimates on time and within budget: 10-year history of collecting data year-round in 3 modes and releasing data to the public on schedule
S6	Demonstrated ability to collect high quality data: high response rates, high coverage rates, low item non-response rates
S7	Methods panel program has demonstrated ability to design, implement, and complete content and methods testing in a timely manner to support the ongoing changes required of the program
S8	Established data user education program and associated materials, including a tutorial and Compass handbooks
S9	Extensive, user-friendly documentation of ACS design and methods (Design and Methodology report)
S10	Website designed to meet public and data user information needs: methods, data uses, background on the survey, etc.
S11	Detailed series of feasibility and quality assessments of the ACS and its alignment to Decennial
S12	Production of annual quality measures and dedicated website to be fully transparent about data quality and margins of errors
S13	Shared management and staff commitment to strengthening the program
S14	Planned initiative to improve operational processes
S15	Bureau's interest in consolidating operations and providing services may offer ACS other ways to get its work done and may alleviate some of the pressure on systems, processes, and personnel
S16	Planned review of data products
S17	Strategic planning effort under way
S18	Effort under way to address process issues underlying isolated data quality problems in some 2010 products
S19	Efforts under way to improve program management and systems engineering
S20	Effort under way to improve governance
S21	Planned review of legislative authorities underlying ACS content

## Weaknesses

ID	Weaknesses
W1	Broadly defined mission and unresolved vision: ACS is all things to all people, making planning and management challenging; interest in exploiting ACS for other purposes puts the core mission at risk
W2	Mandates from senior Census Bureau management for new priorities, research, and methods, without associated resources, strains the core program
W3	Other than OMB-300, significant but undefined performance expectations for ACS (e.g., in prevailing strategic plans)
W4	Current operational structure, with responsibility for aspects of ACS spread across Bureau divisions, complicates decision-making, program and performance management, and execution; this current structure creates dependencies outside ACSO's control and is considered inappropriate to do ACS' work
W5	Operations' reliance on individual knowledge and heroic efforts, rather than knowledge management, cross-training, and mature processes, creates significant mission risk.
W6	Lack of clarity regarding responsibility for certain functions (e.g., data products and user management)
W7	Limitations in current operational processes and systems create opportunities for missed hand-offs, errors, and re-work
W8	Aging, poorly documented systems are difficult to maintain and modify, limiting program agility
W9	An extensive array of data products is produced with no clear mapping to defined and bounded needs
W10	High margins of error for rural and small area estimates, necessitating reliance on period estimates only
W11	Workload (production, change requests, re-work, process improvements) challenges staff and operational capacity to meet all expectations
W12	Management and engineering processes do not support program size/complexity: operations are at risk, and ACS' ability to respond to new requirements is limited
W13	Decision-making structure is neither documented nor understood, making it difficult to identify accountability and responsibility for decisions
W14	Current internal communications processes are insufficient to ensure effective program management
W15	New ACS leadership has limited detailed program knowledge

## Opportunities

ID	Opportunities
O1	Strong support from ACS customers (federal, regional/state/local, academic, and business community data users)
O2	Track-record of working collaboratively with data user community
O3	Serves a growing thirst for extensive and current data on the part of an increasingly quantitative, data-driven world
O4	ACS increasingly is being used to support federal, state, and local programs (e.g., SAIPE) that otherwise would have great difficulty obtaining the data they depend on
O5	Unrivalled position in the federal statistical system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Viewed by OMB as a foundation of the federal statistical system</li> <li>- One of the largest surveys in the world, serving diverse stakeholders in the general public, business, and all levels of government</li> <li>- Highly respected, relied upon for critical public policy and programmatic decision making</li> </ul>
O6	Administration interest in federal statistical programs may present opportunity to clarify ACS's mission/vision and increase impact

## Threats

ID	Threats
T1	Policy or legislative changes could make most of ACS voluntary, which would impact response rates and data quality
T2	ACS may begin to experience, like Decennial, declining response rates in some modes (mail, phone) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More complex demographic: more diverse and complex living arrangements; increasingly mobile population; wide range of language needs</li> <li>- Growing distrust in government and its ability to secure data</li> <li>- Growing apathy or resistance towards federal surveys</li> <li>- Lack of understanding of how widely and locally data are used to improve the lives of the general public</li> </ul>
T3	Lack of external stakeholder management increases risk to the ACS program
T4	Limited public and Congressional statistical literacy makes explaining the nature and value of ACS data more challenging, in turn making it more difficult to justify and defend ACS' funding
T5	Failure to obtain the FY12 funding increase and maintain it in out-years will constrain ACS' ability to maintain a larger sample size to improve data quality for rural and small area samples
T6	Lack of clarity about the limits of ACS' mission and role within the federal statistical system, combined with growing federal/state/local data needs, puts ever-growing strain on resources and processes

## Appendix E: ACS Program Strategic Framework

<b>American Community Survey Program Strategic Framework</b>		
<b>Mission:</b> The American Community Survey collects data and provides quality statistics for America about all its communities.		
<b>Vision:</b> To be the leading source for current demographic, social, economic, and housing statistics on the nation's communities: trusted for our scientific methods; responsive to a changing world; innovative in our solutions; efficiently implemented.		
<b>Goal/Strategic Outcomes/ SWOT Elements</b>	<b>Objectives/ Outcomes/ SWOT Elements</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
<p><b>Goal 1, Mission (Information) Excellence: the ACS program produces quality statistics for the nation</b></p> <p>Strategic Outcome: Timely, accurate, relevant, accessible/usable information</p> <p>[SWOT ELEMENTS: S1, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12, S14, S16, S21; W1, W7, W9, W10; O2, O3, O4, O5; T2, T4, T5]</p>	<p>1.1 ACS program resources aligned to customers' needs</p> <p>Outcome: ACS program resources are appropriately allocated to demand</p> <p>[W1, W2, W9; O3]</p>	<p>1.1.1 Establish a policy for determining how ACS program resources are allocated relative to customers' needs</p>
	<p>1.2 Product line mix and release schedule meet data users' needs</p> <p>Outcome: Data users are satisfied with release schedules and products</p> <p>[S5, S16; W9]</p>	<p>1.2.1 Assess data users' satisfaction with the current product line mix and release schedule</p>
	<p>1.3 ACS content appropriately reflects current data needs</p> <p>Outcome: The ACS content reflects the needs of all of the data users it is intended to serve</p> <p>[S6, S21;W1, W2; O3, O4, O5]</p>	<p>1.3.1 Explore current and new structures for engaging data users in ACS content requirements definition</p>
	<p>1.4 Data user satisfaction with data products access</p> <p>Outcome: ACS data products are delivered in ways that meet the data access abilities of the range of data users</p> <p>[S12, S14]</p>	<p>1.4.1 Evaluate the range of methods for providing data users access to content, in order to deliver the best set of access options for the greatest spectrum of users</p>
	<p>1.5 Timely changes to new content for demographic, social, economic, and housing data products</p>	<p>1.5.1 Enhance the current content integration process to better meet user needs within program and resource constraints</p>

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<b>Goal/Strategic Outcomes/ SWOT Elements</b>	<b>Objectives/ Outcomes/ SWOT Elements</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
	<p>Outcome: The Census Bureau identifies, tests, and integrates new content into the ACS in a timely manner, resulting in timely delivery of data products that reflect the new content</p> <p>[S5; W4, W7, W8, W11, W12]</p>	
	<p>1.6 Small area and small population data users' needs are met</p> <p>Outcome: The needs of small area and small population data users are met, as measured by user satisfaction</p> <p>[S1, S8; W10]</p>	<p>1.6.1 Examine methods to provide small area and small population data users more current data products (e.g., modeled data; time series) and to educate those users about the interpretation of the 5-year estimates</p>
	<p>1.7 Accurate demographic, social, economic, and housing data products are published at all geographic levels</p> <p>Outcome: Survey quality meets data user requirements, as measured by performance against the ACS program's quality commitments to users and by reductions in levels of non-sampling error</p> <p>[S6; W7, W10; T5]</p>	<p>1.7.1 Examine methods to reduce sampling error and educate users about the factors contributing to it</p> <p>1.7.2 Prioritize and address major sources of non-sampling error</p>
	<p>1.8 The ACS program releases data products consistently</p> <p>Outcome: Data releases are consistent with policy that is understood and accepted by users</p> <p>[W9; O2, O3; T4]</p>	<p>1.8.1 Establish a data release policy that identifies the appropriate methods (including the use of thresholds) that should be used to determine which tables, products, and estimates are released to the public</p>

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<b>Goal/Strategic Outcomes/ SWOT Elements</b>	<b>Objectives/ Outcomes/ SWOT Elements</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
	<p>1.9 The ACS program uses statistically sound and robust survey methods</p> <p>Outcome: Improvements against baseline measures for targeted methodological areas</p> <p>[S6, S7; T2]</p>	<p>1.9.1 Conduct a methodological review of selected survey components to identify opportunities to improve the underlying statistical integrity of the survey</p>
	<p>1.10 The ACS data quality and implications for use are well understood</p> <p>Outcome: Better informed decision-making based on ACS data products</p> <p>[S8, S9, S10; T4]</p>	<p>1.10.1 Examine approaches for increasing users’ understanding of data quality and implications for their own decision-making</p>
<p><b>Goal 2, Customer Service Excellence: the ACS program is valued by data users, trusted by the public, and supported by influential stakeholders</b></p> <p>Strategic Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High customer satisfaction rate spans a wide array of parameters across stakeholder groups</li> <li>• Response rate remains at least 96.4% (as defined in the OMB Exhibit 300)</li> <li>• Burden remains the same or lower as measured by change in per household estimated response time, as validated by the OMB through the Information Collection Request for the ACS</li> </ul> <p>[SWOT ELEMENTS: S1, S2, S3, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12; W1, W2, W3, W4, W6, W9, W13; O1, O2, O3, O4, O5, O6; T2, T3, T4, T6]</p>	<p>2.1 Active and effective engagement of stakeholders</p> <p>Outcome: The ACS program is supported by stakeholders</p> <p>[W9; O1, O2, O3; T3]</p>	<p>2.1.1 Partnering with the Communications Directorate and Policy Office, conduct a comprehensive stakeholder analysis/inventory</p> <p>2.1.2 Partnering with the Communications Directorate and Policy Office, develop, implement, and maintain over time a Strategic Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Plan, including sub plans targeting specific stakeholder groups.</p>
	<p>2.2 The ACS program can integrate stakeholder input into decision-making about the ACS program</p> <p>Outcome: The ACS program learns from its stakeholders</p> <p>[W4, W6, W9, W13; O1, O2, O3]</p>	<p>2.2.1 Align stakeholder engagement with the program lifecycle</p>

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<b>Goal/Strategic Outcomes/ SWOT Elements</b>	<b>Objectives/ Outcomes/ SWOT Elements</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
	2.3 Satisfactory customer service  Outcome: Customer service is improved [S8, S9, S10; O1, O2, O4, O5; T3]	2.3.1 Evaluate customers' experience with current customer service and technical assistance
	2.4 Wide-spread awareness, visibility, and use of ACS information  Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACS statistics and data products are used more widely</li> <li>• When ACS statistics and data products are used, the ACS is more often identified as the source</li> </ul> [S8, S9, S10, S11, S12; T4]	2.4.1 Evaluate how stakeholders are currently using ACS statistics, data products, and product lines to identify opportunities to expand and deepen use  2.4.2. Identify approaches to increase awareness and citation of the ACS brand
	2.5 High respondent awareness and response rates  Outcome: The ACS maintains a high mail response rate and a high overall response rate [S3, S6; T2]	2.5.1 Develop and implement a marketing and outreach program to educate the general public on the purpose and value of the ACS
	2.6 Minimize burden  Outcome: Respondent burden is maintained or reduced, as measured by the Information Collection Request for the ACS [T2]	2.6.1 Explore options to reduce burden
	2.7 Role of the ACS program within the Census Bureau clarified  Outcome: Defined role for the ACS program within	2.7.1 Establish a framework for evaluating the implications of alternate roles and uses of the ACS program infrastructure within the Census Bureau

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<b>Goal/Strategic Outcomes/ SWOT Elements</b>	<b>Objectives/ Outcomes/ SWOT Elements</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
	the Census Bureau [S2; W1, W2, W3]	
	2.8 Role of the ACS program within the broader federal statistical system clarified  Outcome: Defined role and performance expectations for the ACS program within the federal statistical system  [S1, S3; W1, W3; O3, O4, O5, O6; T6]	2.8.1 Establish a framework for evaluating the implications of alternate roles and uses of the ACS program infrastructure within the broader federal statistical system
<b>Goal 3, Organizational Excellence: the ACS program is efficient, effective, and adaptable</b>  Strategic Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost per interviewed housing unit is reduced</li> <li>• The ACS meets performance commitments</li> </ul> [SWOT ELEMENTS: S5, S6, S7, S13, S14, S15, S17, S18, S19, S20; W2, W4, W5, W6, W7, W8, W10, W11, W12, W13, W14; T1, T2, T5]	3.1 Efficient, effective, and adaptable survey data collection methods  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost per case for data collection is maintained or decreased while quality is maintained or improved</li> <li>• Time in the field is decreased over the baseline OR cases are resolved more timely</li> </ul> [S5, S6, S7, S15; W2, W10; T1, T2, T5]	3.1.1 Strengthen the approach to defining the Research and Evaluation (R&E) program to make it more integrated and strategic.
	3.2 Efficient and effective operational business processes  Outcome: The ACS program has standardized processes that meet performance goals  [S5, S7, S14, S15, S18; W4, W5, W6, W7]	3.2.1 Evaluate and prioritize ACS program business processes and implement operational improvements
	3.3 Efficient and effective program management  Outcome: The Census Bureau executes the ACS production and discretionary projects on schedule and on budget for X% of projects  [S13, S14, S15, S17, S19, S20; W11, W12, W13, W14]	3.3.1 Evaluate and prioritize program management processes and implement management improvements

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<b>Goal/Strategic Outcomes/ SWOT Elements</b>	<b>Objectives/ Outcomes/ SWOT Elements</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
	<p>3.4 Efficient and effective systems engineering and integration</p> <p>Outcome: The ACS program’s systems are efficient and effective, producing quality outputs on time [S19, W8, W12]</p>	<p>3.4.1 Evaluate and prioritize systems engineering processes and implement management improvements</p> <p>3.4.2 Evaluate and prioritize systems improvements to better support the operation</p>
<p><b>Goal 4, Workforce Excellence: The right people want to work on the ACS program</b></p> <p>Strategic Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High retention of staff with critical skills</li> <li>• Employees’ skill sets are appropriate to the work</li> <li>• Knowledge is institutionalized</li> </ul> <p>[SWOT ELEMENTS: S4; W5, W14, W15]</p>	<p>4.1 Skilled and retained workforce aligned with program needs</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ACS program has the qualified staff it needs any at point in time</li> <li>• Hiring processes are more efficient</li> </ul> <p>[S4; W5, W14, W15]</p>	<p>4.1.1 Align resources to the ACS program’s core capabilities/competencies</p>
	<p>4.2 Knowledge managed institutionally for the benefit of the ACS program</p> <p>Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• X% improvement in staff program knowledge</li> <li>• ACS program single points of failure are eliminated</li> <li>• X% growth in controlled knowledge managed in the repository</li> </ul> <p>[W5, W14, W15]</p>	<p>4.2.1 Institutionalize a knowledge management capability within the ACS program</p>